

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Crystal Wilson and confirmed by Donald Daley on 10/27/2009.

a) Claim 23 :

- i. Replace "6.6 wt %" (line 21) after "absorbent resin is" (line 21) and before "to 14.8 wt %" (line 21) with 7.6 wt %".

b) Claim 7 :

- i. Insert ", and wherein an extraction rate of the multivalent metal component around the surface of said particulate water absorbent resin is 7.6 wt % to 14.8 wt %" after "lower than 100⁰C" (line 26) and before "." (line 26).

c) Claim 8 :

- i. Insert ", and wherein an extraction rate of the multivalent metal component around the surface of said particulate water absorbent resin is 7.6 wt % to 14.8 wt %" after "wt %" (line 21) and before "." (line 21).
- ii. Replace "2.04" (line 21) after "is at least 1.80" (lines 20-21) and before "wt %" (line 21) with "1.80".

Art Unit: 1796

d) Claim 9 :

- i. Insert “, and wherein an extraction rate of the multivalent metal component around the surface of said particulate water absorbent resin is 7.6 wt % to 14.8 wt %” after “or less” (line 21) and before “.” (line 21).

Statement of Reasons for Allowance

2. The obviousness-type double patenting rejection set forth in paragraph 4, of office action mailed 2/9/2009, is withdrawn in light of the filing of a terminal disclaimer on 7/8/2009.
3. Present claims are allowed over the closest prior art for the following reasons -
 - a) It is noted that present claims recite a water absorbent resin composition comprising a particulate water absorbent resin (A) having a crosslinking structure obtained by polymerizing an unsaturated monomer containing an acid group, said water absorbent resin (A) having a crosslinked surface, wherein the water absorbent resin composition contains 95 wt% or more of particles whose particle diameter is less than 850 μm and not less than 106 μm , and a weight average particle diameter of the particle is less than 500 μm and not less than 300 μm , and a logarithmic standard deviation (σ_z) of a particle size distribution of the water absorbent resin is 0.45 or less, and a water-soluble component of the water absorbent resin is 5 wt% or more and 35 wt% or less; and a multivalent metal component, wherein an extraction rate of the multivalent metal component around the surface of said particulate water absorbent resin is 7.6 wt % to 14.8 wt%; and process of preparing the said water absorbent resin composition.

- b) Mertens et al disclose a crosslinked polymer constituting ethylenically unsaturated monomers which contain acid groups. The particle size is between 150 to 800 μm . Aqueous solutions of salt are used to crosslink carboxyl groups near the surface and include polyvalent metal salts. The surface crosslinking is performed at temperatures ranging from 150⁰C to 300⁰C; Hatsuda et al disclose a water absorbent resin powder comprising a crosslinked polymer formed from partially neutralized polyacrylic acid. The crosslinked polymer is further treated with a surface crosslinking agent such as polyvalent metal compounds; and Nakashima et al disclose an acid group containing water absorbent resin powder which is blended with a crosslinking agent reactable with the acid group and include polyvalent salts. The resin powder has a weight average particle diameter of 300 to 600 μm . The particulate water-absorbent agent includes particles having a diameter smaller than 850 μm but not smaller than 150 μm in a ratio of not less than 90 wt%.
- c) Thus, the closest prior art, viz., Mertens et al (WO 00/53644); Hatsuda et al (US 6,562,879); and Nakashima et al (US 2004/0106745 A1) taken individually or in combination, do not disclose or suggest a water absorbent resin composition wherein the extraction rate of the multivalent metal component around the surface of said particulate water absorbent resin is 7.6 wt % to 14.8 wt%. Furthermore, applicant has demonstrated that water absorbent resin composition comprising a water absorbent resin and a multivalent metal component, wherein the extraction rate of the multivalent metal component around the surface of said particulate water absorbent resin is 7.6 wt % to 14.8 wt%, exhibits excellent moisture absorption blocking ratio of zero in examples 1 to 4 (See Table 2) as opposed to that in comparative examples.

Art Unit: 1796

In light of the above, it is clear that rejections of record are untenable and thus the present claims are passed to issue.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to KARUNA P. REDDY whose telephone number is (571)272-6566. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vasu Jagannathan can be reached on (571) 272-1119. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO

Art Unit: 1796

Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call

800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/K. P. R./

Examiner, Art Unit 1796

/Vasu Jagannathan/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1796